United Nations A/C.1/51/PV.25

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First Committee
25th Meeting
Monday, 18 November 1996, 3 p.m.
New York

Chairman: Mr. Sychou ..... (Belarus)

The meeting was called to order at 3.20 p.m.

Agenda items 60, 61 and 63-81 (*continued*)

Action on draft resolutions submitted on all disarmament and international security agenda items

The Chairman: This afternoon, the Committee will proceed to take action on the remaining draft resolutions contained in the following clusters:

cluster 1: draft resolutions A/C.1/51/L.27/Rev.2, A/C.1/51/L.28/Rev.2 and the draft amendment contained in document A/C.1/51/L.54;

cluster 2: draft resolutions A/C.1/51/L.48/Rev.1 and A/C.1/51/L.49;

and cluster 7: draft resolution A/C.1/51/L.11/Rev.2.

The meeting was suspended at 3.25 p.m. and resumed at 3.45 p.m.

The Chairman: I now call on those delegations wishing to make general statements on the draft resolutions before us or to introduce draft amendments.

Mr. Dembinski (Poland): I would like to express the wish of the sponsors of draft resolution A/C.1/51/L.48/Rev.1 that it be adopted without a vote. As stated on Friday, this would be understood to mean that draft resolution A/C.1/51/L.49 would be withdrawn. I would appeal that no call for a vote be made.

Mr. De Icaza (Mexico) (*interpretation from Spanish*): I, too, wish to say a few words about draft resolution A/C.1/51/L.48/Rev.1.

In the general debate, on 27 September, the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Mexico voiced our concern at the fact that

> "the two Powers acknowledged to possess chemical weapons have postponed ratification of the Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production, Stockpiling and Use of Chemical Weapons and on their Destruction, which took us 20 years to negotiate". (*Official Records of the General Assembly, Fifty-first Session, Plenary Meetings, 13th meeting, p. 14*)

The Mexican Foreign Minister urged the United States Congress and the Russian Federation to ratify the Convention as soon as possible and announced that the delegation of Mexico would be initiating consultations with a view to submitting a draft resolution on this subject.

Once the work of the First Committee began, the delegation of Mexico recalled that the opening for signature of the Convention in 1993 was welcomed as marking the unprecedented complete elimination of an entire category of weapons of mass destruction that would strengthen multilateralism as a basis for international peace and security.

We would add that, were the Convention to come into force without the full participation of the United States and the Russian Federation, it would lose its function as a

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disarmament instrument and become yet another exercise in horizontal non-proliferation, thus undermining the objective and purpose pursued during 20 years of intensive efforts.

Bearing in mind that the Convention now has the 65 ratifications necessary for it to enter into force, which should take place on 29 April 1997, the delegation of Mexico, together with that of India, proposed that an urgent appeal be made to countries that acknowledge possessing chemical weapons to ratify the Convention as soon possible so as to preserve its objectives and ensure the full implementation of its provisions.

In order to be able to submit to the General Assembly a single draft resolution that would achieve consensus and clearly express our main concern, we took an active part in the meetings of interested delegations that took place under the very wise leadership of Ambassador Dembinski of Poland. I must stress the great flexibility shown by all delegations, including those of the United States and the Russian Federation, which facilitated the drafting of draft resolution A/C.1/51/L.48/Rev.1, which stresses the importance to the Convention that all possessors of chemical weapons, in particular the United States and the Russian Federation, being among the original parties, which would promote the full realization and effective implementation of the Convention.

It is a compromise text. Our position is not reflected with the vigour or urgency that we would have liked, but the basic concern of the international community that the scope of the Convention be maintained is faithfully reflected in the text sponsored by Canada, India, Mexico and Poland, and we hope that it can be adopted without a vote.

Mr. Yativ (Israel): May I state at the outset that it is with a deep sense of responsibility that my delegation, as a measure of last resort and in an attempt to maintain consensus, is introducing the amendment contained in document A/C.1/51/L.54.

In draft resolution A/C.1/51/L.28/Rev.2, submitted by the delegation of Egypt, operative paragraph 4 has been changed by omitting three words from the text of the same paragraph in last year's text of this resolution. The wording of operative paragraph 4 in our amendment would simply restore the precise language of the same paragraph in the text of the 1995 resolution.

We have argued that the delicate balance should be preserved and that the consensus language should therefore be maintained. Israel's position on the draft resolution is well known to the Committee. Consensus has been maintained during the past 16 years only because both sides have found a way to live with it — each delegation maintaining its own interpretation of and reservations on the resolution.

Israel was able to join consensus on the resolution over the years because it could support the concept of establishing the Middle East as a mutually verifiable nuclear-weapon-free zone in due course, while strongly dissociating itself from the modalities contained in the resolution.

We call upon all delegations to vote in favour of the amendment in document A/C.1/51/L.54, thus returning to the 1995 language of operative paragraph 4 of the resolution. If the amendment is adopted and no further motions are introduced, Israel will join the consensus on the basis of A/C.1/51/L.28/Rev.2. as amended. If draft resolution A/C.1/51/L.54 is not adopted, Israel will have no choice but to ask for a vote on A/C.1/51/L.28/Rev.2.

Mr. Abou-Hadid (Syrian Arab Republic) *(interpretation from Arabic)*: My delegation would like to explain its position on the draft resolution contained in document A/C.1/51/L.27/Rev.2.

Syria has always been one of the leading supporters in the Middle East of the establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the Middle East. We have always called for serious efforts to be made to remove nuclear weapons from the region, given their destructiveness and serious potential threat to peace and security not only in our region, but also worldwide.

Since my country is especially interested in the question of the risks posed by nuclear proliferation in the Middle East and has worked hard to remove this threat, Syria supports the draft resolution contained in document A/C.1/51/L.27/Rev.2. However, we would have preferred that, in the tenth preambular paragraph of the text, the reference to the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty be omitted, since Syria is not a party to the Treaty.

The Chairman: The Committee will now proceed to take action on draft resolution A/C.1/51/L.27/Rev.2.

I shall now call on those delegations wishing to explain their position before a decision is taken.

Mr. Yativ (Israel): The draft resolution contained in document A/C.1/51/L.27/Rev.2, entitled "The risk of nuclear proliferation in the Middle East", is, regrettably, once again before the Committee. To our dismay, we have to engage today in an old ritual that was conceived years ago and retained over the years in order to perpetuate, directly or indirectly, the arraignment of Israel in this Committee.

A scrutiny of this draft resolution reveals the following. First, it continues to single out Israel directly by name. The fact that the name of my country was moved from one part of the draft resolution to another does not change the phenomenon of name-calling, which should be rejected as a norm of behaviour in the deliberations of the United Nations in general and in this Committee in particular. Secondly, the substance of this draft resolution has been and still is devoid of any concrete subject not included in other resolutions. Therefore, it is not a draft resolution on the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) or any other disarmament issue. It is, rather, an instrument designed to encourage anti-Israel positions in this forum. Thirdly, it should also be stressed that this version of the draft resolution omits any reference to the peace process that appeared in last year's text. This is an unfortunate act which is not in line with the ongoing peace process.

Therefore, it would be regrettable if any delegation were swayed by such tactics to justify a change in its position. Voting in favour of this draft resolution is voting in disregard of the peace effort in the Middle East. I wonder whether all those who wish to be involved as honest brokers in the peace process can raise their hands in favour of this draft resolution.

As far as Israel is concerned, I underline once again that it will not be pressured to accept any course or decision that is detrimental to its vital national security interests. This draft resolution will serve neither the cause of non-proliferation in the Middle East nor, obviously, the process of building confidence in regional security in our region. Such a draft resolution will only cast doubt on the integrity of the United Nations as a forum that should promote and support peace in any form or character.

Finally, there is not even one constructive motive behind this draft resolution. Therefore, Israel calls on all delegations to vote against this draft resolution.

Mr. Deimundo Escobal (Argentina) (*interpretation from Spanish*): The delegation of Argentina wishes to state that it cannot pronounce itself on draft resolution A/C.1/51/L.27/Rev.2 because it has no instructions on it.

Mr. Sáenz (Costa Rica) (*interpretation from Spanish*): I have instructions to abstain in the voting on draft resolution A/C.1/51/L.27/Rev.2 in the light of resolution GC(40)RES/22 adopted on 20 September 1996 by the General Conference of the International Atomic Energy Agency.

Mr. Moradi (Islamic Republic of Iran): I would like to make a brief comment on draft resolution A/C.1/51/L.27/Rev.2, entitled "The risk of nuclear proliferation in the Middle East".

In the view of my delegation, this draft resolution is more relevant today than in the past. It calls upon Israel, the only State in the Middle East that is not a party to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT), to join this Treaty and place its unsafeguarded nuclear-weapon programme under the safeguards of the International Atomic Energy Agency. We firmly believe that the accession of Israel to the NPT will facilitate the establishment of a zone free from nuclear and other weapons of mass destruction. The establishment of such a zone is a separate matter and should not become the hostage of the so-called peace process, which has no prospect of restoring genuine peace and security to the Middle East.

The Chairman: The Committee will now proceed to take action on draft resolution A/C.1/51/L.27/Rev.2.

A separate vote on the sixth preambular paragraph has been requested.

I call on the Secretary of the Committee to conduct the voting.

Mr. Lin Kuo-Chung (Secretary of the Committee): Draft resolution A/C.1/51/L.27/Rev.2, entitled "The risk of nuclear proliferation in the Middle East", was introduced by the representative of Egypt on behalf of the States members of the League of Arab States at the 17th meeting of the Committee on 7 November 1996. The draft resolution is also sponsored by Malaysia.

The Committee will now proceed to take action on the sixth preambular paragraph of the draft resolution.

The Chairman: I call on the representative of the United Kingdom on a point of order.

Sir Michael Weston (United Kingdom): I wonder if the Secretary could make absolutely clear to us on which preambular paragraph we are currently voting, because I think there is some confusion. In addition to its number, might he also read out the first few words?

Mr. Lin Kuo-Chung (Secretary of the Committee): The sixth preambular paragraph begins:

> "*Recalling also* the decision on principles and objectives for nuclear non-proliferation and disarmament adopted by the Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons on 11 May 1995, in which the Conference urged universal adherence to the Treaty as an urgent priority and called upon all States" and so on.

A recorded vote was taken.

In favour:

Afghanistan, Algeria, Andorra, Australia, Austria, Azerbaijan, Bahrain, Bangladesh, Belarus, Belgium, Belize, Benin, Bhutan, Bolivia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Botswana, Brunei Darussalam, Bulgaria, Cambodia, Cameroon, Canada, Chad, Chile, China, Colombia, Congo, Côte d'Ivoire, Croatia, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Denmark, Djibouti, Egypt, El Salvador, Estonia, Finland, France, Gabon, Georgia, Germany, Greece, Guyana, Haiti, Hungary, Iceland, Indonesia, Iran (Islamic Republic of), Ireland, Italy, Jamaica, Japan, Jordan, Kuwait, Lebanon, Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malaysia, Maldives, Malta, Marshall Islands, Mauritania, Mexico, Monaco, Mongolia, Morocco, Mozambique, Myanmar, Namibia, Nepal, Netherlands, New Zealand, Niger, Norway, Oman, Panama, Papua New Guinea, Paraguay, Peru, Philippines, Poland, Portugal, Qatar, Republic of Korea, Republic of Moldova, Romania, Russian Federation, Samoa, Saudi Arabia, Singapore, Slovakia, Slovenia, Solomon Islands, South Africa, Spain, Sri Lanka, Sudan, Suriname, Sweden, Syrian Arab Republic, Thailand, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Togo, Tunisia, Turkey, Uganda, Ukraine, United Arab Emirates, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, United Republic of Tanzania, United States of America, Uruguay, Venezuela, Viet Nam, Yemen, Zambia, Zimbabwe

Against:

India, Israel

Abstaining:

Armenia, Costa Rica, Cuba, Fiji, Guatemala, Kenya, Kyrgyzstan, Latvia, Nicaragua, Pakistan

The sixth preambular paragraph was retained by 118 votes to 2, with 10 abstentions.

[Subsequently, the delegations of Armenia and the Marshall Islands informed the Secretariat that they had not intended to participate in the voting.]

The Chairman: I call on the Secretary of the Committee to conduct the voting on the draft resolution as a whole.

Mr. Lin Kuo-Chung (Secretary of the Committee): The Committee will now proceed to take action on the draft resolution as a whole.

A recorded vote has been requested.

A recorded vote was taken.

In favour:

Afghanistan, Algeria, Andorra, Angola, Australia, Austria, Azerbaijan, Bahrain, Bangladesh, Belarus, Belgium, Bhutan, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Botswana, Brunei Darussalam, Bulgaria, Burkina Faso, Cambodia, Cameroon, Chad, Chile, China, Colombia, Croatia, Cuba, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Democratic People's Republic of Korea, Denmark, Djibouti, Egypt, El Salvador, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Guyana, Haiti, Hungary, Iceland, Indonesia, Iran (Islamic Republic of), Ireland, Italy, Japan, Jordan, Kuwait, Lebanon, Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, Liechtenstein, Luxembourg, Malaysia, Maldives, Malta, Mauritania, Mexico, Monaco, Morocco, Mozambique, Namibia, Netherlands, New Zealand, Niger, Pakistan, Papua New Guinea, Philippines, Poland, Portugal, Qatar, Republic of Korea, Romania, Russian Federation, Samoa, Saudi Arabia, Slovakia, Slovenia, Solomon Islands, South Africa, Spain, Sri Lanka, Sudan, Suriname, Sweden, Syrian Arab Republic, Thailand, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Togo, Tunisia, Turkey, Uganda, Ukraine, United Arab Emirates, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, United Republic of Tanzania, Viet Nam, Yemen, Zambia, Zimbabwe

Against:

Israel, United States of America

Abstaining:

Belize, Benin, Bolivia, Brazil, Canada, Costa Rica, Côte d'Ivoire, Estonia, Fiji, Gabon, Georgia, Guatemala, India, Jamaica, Kazakstan, Kenya, Kyrgyzstan, Latvia, Lithuania, Marshall Islands, Mongolia, Myanmar, Nepal, Nicaragua, Nigeria, Norway, Panama, Paraguay, Peru, Singapore, Uruguay, Venezuela

The draft resolution was adopted by 98 votes to 2, with 32 abstentions.

[Subsequently, the delegation of Oman informed the Secretariat that it had intended to vote in favour.]

The Chairman: I shall now call upon those delegations who wish to explain their votes or positions.

Mr. Surie (India): My delegation abstained in the voting on the draft resolution contained in document A/C.1/51/L.27/Rev.2 as a whole, and voted against preambular paragraph 6 of that draft. The reasons for this are obvious and consistent with India's stand on the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT).

Briefly I may mention that India is not a party to the NPT and has no intention of becoming one. Therefore, we cannot support the call upon all States not yet party to that Treaty to accede to it. For that reason, we voted against preambular paragraph 6. My delegation also does not support any State being singled out for specific reference. We therefore abstained in the voting on this draft resolution as a whole.

Mr. Álvarez (Uruguay) (*interpretation from Spanish*): Despite the negotiating efforts made at the very last moment, the delegation of Uruguay maintained its abstention in the voting on draft resolution A/51/L.27/Rev.2. We did so because the text once again incorporates a practice opposed by Uruguay: that of singling out a State in a discriminatory way, targeting it in a text that should contain conciliatory language in the quest for regional consensus. Moreover, the text makes no reference to the peace process that began in Madrid, which is an indispensable frame of reference for ensuring the effectiveness of any initiative towards international peace and security taken in that area.

We must lend all our support to the peace process in the Middle East to achieve concrete results that can serve as a solid basis for disarmament and denuclearization initiatives in the region. A resolution that does not contain language supportive of that process and practices name-calling does not possess the positive elements necessary to the difficult negotiations being undertaken by the parties concerned.

Ms. Hamilton (Australia): Australia voted in favour of the draft resolution entitled "Risk of nuclear proliferation in the Middle East". We understand the unease of other delegations that this Committee continues to single out only one country or only one region in identifying risks of proliferation, but the draft resolution is consistent with Australia's objectives of universal adherence to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) and the application of full-scope safeguards on nuclear facilities, and with our support for a zone free of weapons of mass destruction in the Middle East.

Mr. Hasan (Iraq): My delegation supports the draft resolution contained in document A/C.1/51/L.27/Rev.2, which has just been adopted, even though it has many gaps and deficiencies. I will mention some of them.

First, the title does not reflect the reality on the ground. What the Middle East is facing now is not only the risk of the proliferation of nuclear weapons, but also the threat of the existing Israeli nuclear weapons. No one now has any doubts about the existence of Israeli nuclear weapons in the region or their threat to the security of the region and of the world in general.

Secondly, the draft resolution omits reference to Security Council resolution 487 (1981), which singled out Israel and called upon it to place its nuclear facilities under the safeguards of the International Atomic Energy Agency.

The Chairman: The Committee will now proceed to take action on draft amendment A/C.1/51/L.54.

I shall first call on those representatives who wish to explain their votes or positions before a decision is taken.

Mr. Karem (Egypt): The Egyptian delegation has demonstrated restraint; we have been extremely measured in our responses to some of the misinterpretations of fact that were introduced a few moments ago. In a spirit of compromise and consensus, however, we have decided to maintain this attitude and to continue to be measured in our responses.

The Egyptian delegation deeply regrets that we have come to this stage at which an amendment is being introduced on a consensus draft resolution — a consensus

we have enjoyed and have worked towards for a very long period of time. It must be said — and let it be known to all members of this Committee — that the process of negotiation was conducted in transparency and in full cooperation, especially with the Israeli delegation. The process of negotiation was long and arduous and along the way the Egyptian delegation presented amendments; the fact that the draft resolution is in its second revision reflects the kind of amendments we accepted in the process of striving for consensus.

Some of the facts and some of the ideas that have been very dear to our hearts and which we still think better reflect the reality of the region in which we live were withdrawn. These include a particular paragraph referring to a resolution adopted by the 1995 Review and Extension Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) and another particular paragraph dealing with the issue of nuclear safety in the Middle East. We think this is a very pertinent issue and one which has been raised repeatedly in the past five years as we, the people of the Middle East, live with repeated reports that nuclear safety is under threat in the Middle East region. Nevertheless, these arduous and lengthy negotiations came about and we went into them hoping to achieve consensus. So I underline that we deeply regret that this kind of amendment has been introduced and I must say why.

The Ambassador of Israel claimed that this paragraph restores the old text to preserve a delicate balance. Let it be known that this paragraph introduced by the representative of Israel was not part and parcel of the resolution on a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the Middle East in the General Assembly. It was introduced three years ago at the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) General Conference in respect of a different resolution that dealt with the application of IAEA safeguards in the Middle East region. There, negotiations on this paragraph were begun and there was a reference inviting all States in the Middle East region to adhere to international non-proliferation regimes, particularly the nuclear non-proliferation regime, as a means of complementing participation in a zone free of all weapons of mass destruction. I am quoting verbatim from the resolution of the IAEA. The following paragraph reflected further support for the establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the region and the General Conference noted the importance of the ongoing bilateral Middle East peace negotiations and activities.

At the time, three years ago, there were ongoing bilateral Middle East peace negotiations, including the Syrian track and the activities of the multilateral Working Group on Arms Control and Regional Security (ACRS) were under way. This Working Group was established on the initiative of Egypt before the Madrid peace conference to allow Israeli colleagues to sit at the same table in a spirit of confidence-building and transparency to negotiate security and arms control with all members of the Middle East region who had decided to participate, and to allow them to have direct contact and engage in direct negotiations with all the parties concerned.

At the time, there were ongoing bilateral Middle East peace negotiations and activities, but as we speak today, in 1996, I deeply regret having to announce that there are no ongoing bilateral Middle East peace negotiations except on one particular track. So how can we deceive ourselves in the draft resolution and use language that was perfectly valid a few years ago, but which we do not think better reflects the reality, factually speaking, of 1996? The activities of the multilateral Working Group on Arms Control and Regional Security were indeed pertinent three years ago. But the activities have been frozen, which we deeply regret, and as we speak the multilateral Working Group on Arms Control is not involved in any activities. We hope the Working Group will resume its activities in the very near future and we are ready to cooperate and help push that process forward.

We also underline the topicality of the peace process, which needs to be strengthened, put back on the right track and better reflect the realities of the region as we live them.

So, I regret to say that the Egyptian delegation, because of the reasons just mentioned, will not be able to support draft resolution A/C.1/51/L.54. We do not think that its language reflects the situation as we experience it in our own region. Let me again underscore the fact that we also deeply regret that this amendment was put forward and not only breaks the letter of consensus we have achieved but also the spirit of consensus, notwithstanding, of course, the fact that we conducted an extensive process of negotiations with the Israeli delegation. The Egyptian delegation will regretfully vote against this paragraph.

Mr. Abou-Hadid (Syrian Arab Republic) (*interpretation from Arabic*): My country was among the first of the region to support the establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the Middle East, an idea that has not materialized so far. This is because Israel is the only country of the region that has not acceded to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, has not declared any intention to do so and refuses to subject its nuclear

facilities and activities to full-scope International Atomic Energy Agency safeguards.

My country opposes and will vote against the amendment contained in document A/C.1/51/L.54, despite our support for the draft resolution as a whole. We oppose this amendment because it refers to bilateral peace negotiations as if they were ongoing. This is contrary to the facts on the ground, because it is common knowledge that the peace negotiations begun at Madrid have come to a halt because of the conduct of the current Israeli Government. Indeed, the entire peace-negotiating process is threatened with collapse because Israel is not committed to fulfilling the obligations and agreements reached in past stages of the peace process. My country had hoped that there would be a call upon Israel in the draft resolution to resume negotiations from the point at which they came to a stop and to implement all agreements and obligations undertaken so that the negotiating environment could be improved with a view to establishing peace, stability and security in the region.

Mr. Amar (Morocco) (*interpretation from French*): Morocco was among the first countries to call for the establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the Middle East. Morocco follows and has always followed with concern the risks inherent in the proliferation of nuclear weapons in that region. Morocco has therefore always voted and will continue to vote in favour of the resolution on this item, contained this year in document A/C.1/51/L.28/Rev.2, introduced as usual by Egypt.

The delegation of Morocco very much regrets the submission this year of the amendment contained in document A/C.1/51/L.54, which was introduced by Israel despite the fact that consensus has prevailed until this year. The delegation of Morocco believes that draft resolution A/C.1/51/L.28/Rev.2 better reflects the realities prevailing in the Middle East.

As everyone knows, there is no current activity in the multilateral Working Group on Arms Control and Regional Security. We are therefore not in a position to vote in favour of A/C.1/51/L.54, as it runs counter to the spirit of the consensus achieved and the spirit of the consultations that took place on A/C.1/51/L.28/Rev.2.

Mr. Aamiry (Jordan): Jordan, of course, has all along been one of those countries that has adamantly sought to work for the peaceful resolution of conflicts in the Middle East and has always sought dialogue as the best means for resolving conflicts. Jordan has all along sought the establishment of an area free of weapons of mass destruction, foremost among which are nuclear weapons. That is a priority that was set by the Conference on Disarmament long ago.

With regard to the amendment that was introduced by the delegate of Israel and is contained in document A/C.1/51/L.54, Jordan, again, has long sought out and called on all its friends within and outside the area — that is to say, the sponsors of the peace process — to exert whatever influence they have on their friends in the area to resume the bilateral peace talks from the point at which they ended. Here, I am talking about the Syrian- and Lebanese-Israeli peace tracks.

There has been a great deal of diplomatic activity going on for quite some time, in fact, solely with a view to getting the peace process started again. The words "ongoing bilateral Middle East peace negotiations" represent something we wish were really true. The fact that we wish it were true means, in my mind, that they are not ongoing and are not on track right now. This is why my delegation will vote in favour of A/C.1/51/L.28/Rev.2 as is, without this sudden amendment.

As far as the amendment is concerned, as I have no instructions to vote in favour of or against it, for the time being I will probably not participate in the voting on the amendment. However, I wish this amendment were withdrawn.

Mr. Moradi (Islamic Republic of Iran): In 1974, Iran was the first, along with Egypt, to initiate the call for the establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the region of the Middle East. The Islamic Republic of Iran has been fervently pursuing that objective and hopes that it will be realized at as early a date as possible. It is in the light of this that we fully support draft resolution A/C.1/51/L.28/Rev.2 and will continue to pursue its implementation with urgency.

My delegation would have liked to have been a sponsor of the draft resolution. However, because of references to the peace negotiations — about which we have reservations based on our principled positions — in the ninth preambular paragraph and operative paragraph 4, and because these are unnecessary references to an unrelated matter, we are regrettably unable to become a sponsor of the draft resolution.

We nevertheless wholeheartedly support its context and discourage any attempts to introduce unrelated elements

into this important draft resolution. It is in this context that we will vote against the amendment contained in document A/C.1/51/L.54.

The Chairman: The Committee will now proceed to take action on draft amendment A/C.1/51/L.54.

A recorded vote has been requested.

I call on the Secretary of the Committee.

Mr. Lin Kuo-Chung (Secretary of the Committee): The draft amendment to draft resolution A/C.1/51/L.28/Rev.2, as contained in document A/C.1/51/L.54, entitled "Establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the region of the Middle East", was introduced by the representative of Israel at the 25th meeting of the Committee on 18 November 1996.

A recorded vote was taken.

In favour:

Andorra, Angola, Argentina, Australia, Austria, Belarus, Belgium, Bhutan, Brazil, Bulgaria, Cambodia, Canada, Costa Rica, Croatia, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Denmark, Ecuador, El Salvador, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Iceland, Ireland, Israel, Italy, Japan, Kazakstan, Latvia, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Marshall Islands, Mexico, Monaco, Netherlands, New Zealand, Nigeria, Norway, Paraguay, Poland, Portugal, Republic of Korea, Republic of Moldova, Romania, Russian Federation, Samoa, Singapore, Slovakia, Slovenia, South Africa, Spain, Sweden, Turkey, Ukraine, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, United States of America, Uruguay

Against:

Afghanistan, Algeria, Bahrain, Bangladesh, Brunei Darussalam, Cuba, Democratic People's Republic of Korea, Djibouti, Egypt, Indonesia, Iran (Islamic Republic of), Jordan, Kuwait, Lebanon, Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, Malaysia, Mauritania, Mongolia, Morocco, Oman, Pakistan, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Sudan, Syrian Arab Republic, Tunisia, United Arab Emirates, Yemen

Abstaining:

Belize, Benin, Bolivia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Chad, Chile, Colombia, Georgia, Ghana, Guatemala, India, Kenya, Kyrgyzstan, Malta, Myanmar, Nepal, Nicaragua, Panama, Papua New Guinea, Peru, Philippines, Solomon Islands, Sri Lanka, Thailand, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Togo, Uganda, United Republic of Tanzania, Venezuela, Zambia, Zimbabwe

The amendment was adopted by 61 votes to 28, with 33 abstentions.

The Chairman: I now call on delegations wishing to make statements in explanation of vote or position.

Mr. O'Rourke (Ireland): The States members of the European Union voted in favour of the draft amendment submitted by the delegation of Israel in respect to operative paragraph 4 of draft resolution A/C.1/51/L.28/Rev.2. In so doing, the European Union does not in any way intend to convey the view that the state of the Middle East process is either satisfactory or unchanged from the position reflected in resolution 50/66 adopted by the General Assembly on 12 December 1995.

Indeed, the Council of Ministers of the European Union, at its meeting in Luxembourg on 28 October 1996, underlined "the deterioration" that had occurred in the peace process. The European Union does not consider that the First Committee is the appropriate forum in which to consider developments specifically related to the Middle East peace process. Therefore, in accepting the repetition of the language adopted in 1995, the European Union is giving due regard to the fact that the draft resolution before this Committee deals with the question of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the Middle East and is not a draft resolution on the peace process as such. The text contained in A/C.1/51/L.28/Rev.2 does emphasize the importance of the peace process, as well as that of the multilateral Working Group on Arms Control and Regional Security. We believe that no delegation could take issue with that emphasis.

Finally, our acceptance of a reference to the peace process in the draft resolution does not imply that the European Union accepts the use of such language in other draft resolutions that come before Committees dealing with the state of the Middle East peace process.

The associated countries of Central and Eastern Europe align themselves with this explanation of vote, as does Iceland.

The Chairman: The Committee will now take action on draft resolution A/C.1/51/L.28/Rev.2, as amended.

I call on the Secretary of the Committee.

Mr. Lin Kuo-Chung (Secretary of the Committee): Draft resolution A/C.1/51/L.28/Rev.2, "Establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the region of the Middle East", was introduced by the representative of Egypt at the 17th meeting of the Committee on 7 November 1996.

The Chairman: The sponsors have expressed the wish that the draft resolution, as amended, be adopted by the Committee without a vote. If I hear no objection, I shall take it that the Committee wishes to act accordingly.

Draft resolution A/C.1/51/L.28/Rev.2, as amended, was adopted.

The Chairman: I shall now call on delegations wishing to make statements in explanation of position on the draft resolution just adopted.

Mr. Hasan (Iraq): My delegation has reservations with regard to the references in the ninth preambular paragraph and operative paragraph 4 to the so-called peace process and so-called disarmament initiatives in the Middle East. Both are actually at an impasse. No lasting peace can prevail in the Middle East while one party, with the support of a super-Power, remains outside any non-proliferation regime and is still refusing to adhere to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT), thereby defying the will of the international community, as reflected in various resolutions and decisions.

Mr. Yativ (Israel): I would like to explain my delegation's position on draft resolution A/C.1/51/L.28/Rev.2, as amended.

Israel has joined the consensus on this resolution over the years because it identifies with the goal of establishing the Middle East, in due course, as a mutually and effectively verifiable nuclear-weapon-free zone, after peace is sealed and proven over time among all States of the region. However, Israel has continuously dissociated itself from the modalities contained in the draft resolution and has declared its fundamental reservations on the language and substance of the draft resolution.

The reasons for those reservations are clear and have been elaborated on in our explanations of vote on this issue over the years. Let me briefly reiterate the main principles of our policy, which make it impossible for us to accept the modalities contained in the draft resolution.

Israel's policy on the nuclear issue in the region of the Middle East is based on the following principles. First, comprehensiveness: The nuclear issue should be dealt with within the full context of the peace process, as well as all security problems, conventional and non-conventional; secondly, the regional framework: Nuclear non-proliferation will be achieved and ascertained only by establishing in due course a mutually verifiable nuclear-weapon-free zone in the Middle East; thirdly, a step-by-step approach: Practicality dictates beginning the process with confidence- and security-building measures establishing peaceful relations and reconciliation among all States and peoples of the region and in due course complementing the process by dealing with conventional and non-conventional arms control, where priorities are assigned to systems that experience has proven to be destructive and destabilizing; fourthly, the primacy of the peace process: Negotiations on all issues concerning the security of the region have to take place in a free and direct way within the framework of the peace process encompassing all the States in the region.

The conditions prevailing in our region are not as yet ripe for negotiations, let alone for the establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone. Looking at other regions, be they in Latin America, the Pacific region or in Africa, we see that the respective regional States enjoyed common denominators that constituted absolute prerequisites for the formation of regional nuclear-weapon-free zones. The conditions that prevailed before the establishment of the zones included, *inter alia*, peaceful relations and mutual confidence, economic cooperation and a general belief in the enhancement of common interests through institutional regional frameworks. The urge to embark on such an endeavour was, in all cases, a result of regional initiatives and direct negotiations, culminating in a consensus. Even then, it required a long and arduous process to attain the goal of nuclear-weapon-free zones.

Turning to the Middle East, we see that the situation is different. At this time, several regional States are still in a formal state of war with Israel. Moreover, some regional States still refuse to forswear war as a means of settling disputes and attempt directly or indirectly to impede the peace process, including by means of terror. Hence, it is evident that, at the present moment, many of the prerequisites necessary for a meaningful discussion on arms control, including the establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone, are still missing.

Therefore, at this sensitive juncture of the peace process in the Middle East, restraint and caution are strongly recommended in order to arrive at greater achievements in the future. What we need to do now is to promote the peace process and create overall confidence in the region, and not to address divisive issues.

It is through its unqualified support for the peace talks and their framework that the General Assembly can make its own contribution to the enhancement of confidence. Attempts to lift the nuclear issue out of its comprehensive context would be seen as detracting from the sovereignty of the peace talks. Such attempts in the past have blocked the road to peaceful accommodation and might shake the delicate balance achieved through direct negotiations.

While Israel supports the concept of establishing the Middle East as a nuclear-weapon-free zone in due course, it has never supported the modalities of this resolution. Israel is not bound by those provisions of the present draft resolution that are not in line with its policy. We hope that the consensus reached here, as modest as it is, will contribute to the goodwill and moderation so needed for the crucial efforts we all have to invest in the ongoing peace process.

The Chairman: I call on the delegation of the Islamic Republic of Iran to make general statements.

Mr. Moradi (Islamic Republic of Iran): In the current session of the First Committee, many delegations feel strongly about a resolution on the Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC). The deposit of the 65 instruments of ratification have triggered the entry into force of the Convention in the near future. Non-ratification of the Convention by the two declared possessors of chemical weapons has led to some apprehension on the nature of the Convention as a disarmament treaty. The Preparatory Commission for the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW) has yet to resolve some remaining outstanding issues, including the implementation of Article XI of the Convention on the promotion of economic and technical cooperation in the chemical sector and the removal of all trade restrictions upon the entry into force of the Convention.

However, there were divergent views on elements of such a resolution and its final shape. Several competing draft resolutions were also floating around. Our delegation, determined to contribute to this process as well as to the adoption of a single resolution on this important topic, produced a draft resolution that was based on the views of interested delegations of the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM) as well as other States.

This draft, which was later submitted as A/C.1/51/L.49, enjoyed broad support in the NAM and was therefore presented to the Group of Western European and other States as a NAM-supported basis for negotiations on a CWC draft resolution to be adopted without a vote. This text was accepted as a basis of such negotiations and fruitful and constructive negotiations on it subsequently took place under the able chairmanship of Ambassador Dembinski of Poland. After two weeks of intense negotiations, a near consensus emerged on a draft resolution, which was later submitted as A/C.1/51/L.48.

However, one delegation participating in these negotiations had some reservations on language in the draft that would urge the signatory States and the Preparatory Commission of the OPCW to intensify efforts and to resolve all remaining outstanding issues before the entry into force of the Convention. Given the deadline for submission of draft resolutions, we had no choice but to submit two draft resolutions on the CWC and to continue consultations with a view to finding language that was acceptable to that delegation.

Considering the late stage of our work, and given the importance that my delegation attached to the full and effective implementation of the Chemical Weapons Convention and the work of the Preparatory Commission in this regard, and in the spirit of cooperation, we decided not to insist on our original proposal on the work of the Preparatory Commission and agreed to language that was incorporated in A/C.1/51/L.48/Rev.1 as a new operative paragraph 6.

This compromise by all delegations facilitated the adoption of one resolution on the CWC. We have therefore decided not to press to a vote the draft resolution contained in A/C.1/51/L.49. We hope that this spirit of cooperation and constructive attitude, which facilitated the adoption of one CWC resolution without a vote after four years, does send a positive message to The Hague and encourages all States, as well as the Preparatory Commission of OPCW, to redouble efforts with a view to an early resolution of all remaining substantive issues. This, we are convinced, will help realize all the goals of the Convention.

The Chairman: The Committee takes note of the withdrawal of draft resolution A/C.1/51/L.49.

The Committee will now proceed to take action on draft resolution A/C.1/51/L.48/Rev.1.

I now call on those delegations wishing to explain their position before a decision is taken.

Mr. Abdel Aziz (Egypt): Egypt has traditionally supported all measures designed to contribute to the promotion of international and regional stability and has always committed itself to engage in constructive actions in the fulfilment of this objective. It is in this spirit that we cannot but sympathize with the general thrust of the draft resolution contained in A/C.1/51/L.48/Rev.1, as it aims at ensuring the prohibition and drastic reduction of chemical weapons stockpiles, particularly by the two declared possessors of chemical weapons, and thus gives the treaty its correct and effective impact in the disarmament field.

Nevertheless, as the treaty is about to enter into force, in April 1997, Egypt would like to stress on this occasion its well- known position vis-à-vis the treaty and its implications for the Middle East region. During the course of the voting process in the First Committee, we listened very carefully to the explanations of vote given by the representative of Israel on various draft resolutions, including draft resolution A/C.1/51/L.2 on the Biological Weapons Convention (BWC), in which Israel repeatedly stated that the application of such conventions and treaties should include all States in the Middle East region within a mutually accepted verification mechanism.

As I am sure that this is the same concept Israel will apply to the Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC), I have to say that the Egyptian Government shares this view but in a wider scope, not limited merely to the BWC and the CWC, but also covering the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT), to which all States of the Middle East, except Israel, have become States parties or are about to do so.

Needless to say, the three treaties form the legal regime for weapons of mass destruction. In order to strike a correct balance between the security concerns and needs of all States in the region, including Egypt, and for the same reasons put forward by Israel on the need for all States in the Middle East to join all the relevant conventions and treaties — NPT, CWC, and BWC — without exception and within a mutually verifiable mechanism Egypt has declined to sign the CWC until Israel joins the NPT. And we urge Israel, instead of applying a selective approach that reflects a narrow scope not accepted by all States in the region, to apply the same argument it used with regard to the CWC and BWC in its explanations of votes regarding the NPT.

Despite all these considerations, my delegation did not ask for a recorded vote on this draft resolution. At the same time, we do not consider ourselves as part of any consensus decision to be taken on this draft resolution today. And we would like to register our reservations vis-à-vis operative paragraph 4 of the draft resolution contained in A/C.1/51/L.48/Rev.1.

Mr. Abou-Hadid (Syrian Arab Republic) (*interpretation from Arabic*): My delegation will abstain in the voting on A/C.1/51/L.48/Rev.1 because of certain aspects of the Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production, Stockpiling and Use of Chemical Weapons and on Their Destruction. First, the measures laid out in the Convention are not sufficient to guarantee against improper verification or inspection. Secondly, the Convention does not explicitly guarantee that its implementation will not hinder the economic or technical development of the parties, in particular those that are developing countries. Thirdly, the Convention does not provide general security guarantees to punish all uses or threats of use of chemical weapons against any party to the Convention. These are some of the deficiencies and weaknesses shared by the Convention and the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, which has not become universal although it entered into force more than 25 years ago. Everyone recognizes the deficiencies and weaknesses of the Convention with regard to the verification regime.

The national security of States is an indivisible whole. Therefore, we should examine all threats to security with the same degree of seriousness and guarantee a precise and delicate balance among all factors and elements related to national security. Thus, the Final Document of the first special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament set priorities for disarmament, in particular nuclear disarmament, since the tremendous destructiveness of nuclear weapons poses the gravest threat to the future of mankind. My country therefore supports the establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the Middle East, as well as initiatives to denuclearize all weapons of mass destruction.

The Chairman: I call on the representative of Brazil on a point of order.

Mr. Lamazière (Brazil): I have a question for the Secretariat. From what I understand, it has been widely

announced that the Convention will enter into force on 28 April 1997. Is there any particular technical or legal reason for this date being included in operative paragraph 1 of the draft resolution?

The Chairman: Would a sponsor of the draft resolution care to answer this question?

Mr. Dembinski (Poland): I would like to thank the representative of Brazil for his question and to respond with a clarification.

The idea of the sponsors was to make the draft resolution as factual as possible. I do not have the text of the Chemical Weapons Convention with me and thus cannot quote the article precisely, but the Convention provides that it will enter into force six months after the deposit of the sixty-fifth ratification. And as we know that the sixty-fifth ratification was deposited with the Secretary-General on 29 October 1996, the Convention will enter into force on 29 April 1997.

The Chairman: I call on the representative of the Russian Federation on a point of order.

Mr. Berdennikov (Russian Federation) (*interpretation from Russian*): Like the Brazilian delegation, we are concerned about the fact that we are going to take action on a draft resolution the text of which is not complete. We would be very grateful to the Secretariat if it could clarify the sections under discussion and provide official information on when, specifically, the Convention will come into force. We know that the *Journal* says the Convention will come into force on 29 April; perhaps the Secretariat could confirm that date.

I do not have the text of the Convention before me, but I recall that the provision on entry into force provides for the Convention entering into force 180 days after the sixty-fifth ratification, which, as we understand it, took place on 31 October.

The Chairman: I call on the Director of the Centre for Disarmament Affairs.

Mr. Davinic (Director of the Centre for Disarmament Affairs): I would like to confirm that, since the Secretary-General is the depository of the Convention, the Office of Legal Affairs has advised us that the Convention on Chemical Weapons will enter into force on the 180th day after the deposit of the sixty-fifth instrument of ratification. According to the Office of Legal Affairs, the 180th day will be 29 April 1997; therefore, as of that particular date, the Convention will be in force.

In view of this, the Secretariat will make an appropriate insertion in paragraph 1 of draft resolution A/C.1/51/L.48/Rev.1 to reflect the correct date and when the draft resolution is considered in the General Assembly, the appropriate date, as I have just stated, will be reflected in the draft.

Mr. Albesbas (Libyan Arab Jamahiriya): My delegation would like to associate itself fully with the statement made earlier by the representative of Egypt on draft resolution A/C.1/51/L.48/Rev.1.

Mr. Chirila (Romania): I understand that the draft resolution will be put to a vote at the request of one delegation.

I should like to stress that my delegation will vote in favour of the draft resolution. The Romanian delegation, from the very beginning, encouraged the adoption by the Committee of a single draft resolution: that initiated by Canada, India, Mexico and Poland contained in document A/C.1/51/L.48/Rev.1.

Like other delegations, my delegation refrained from becoming a sponsor. We wanted to join in sponsoring the draft, but we refrained from doing so in order to facilitate the process of negotiation and thus avoid adopting more than one draft resolution. I stress this because, from the point of view of the Romanian delegation, the draft resolution merits a large number of sponsors.

The Chairman: I call on the representative of Mexico on a point of order.

Mr. De Icaza (Mexico) *(interpretation from Spanish)*: It is my understanding that no delegation has requested a vote on this draft resolution.

The Chairman: The Committee will now proceed to take a decision on draft resolution A/C.1/51/L.48/Rev.1.

I call on the Secretary of the Committee.

Mr. Lin Kuo-Chung (Secretary of the Committee): Draft resolution A/C.1/51/L.48/Rev.1, entitled "Status of the Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production, Stockpiling and Use of Chemical Weapons and on Their Destruction", was introduced by the representative

of Poland at the 17th meeting of the Committee on 7 November 1996.

In addition to the sponsors listed in the draft resolution itself, it is also sponsored by the Islamic Republic of Iran.

It should be noted that, in the fourth line of operative paragraph 1 of the draft resolution, the number "29" should be properly inserted, so that the date reads "29 April 1997".

The Chairman: The sponsors of the draft resolution have expressed the wish that it be adopted by the Committee without a vote. If I hear no objection, I will take it that the Committee wishes to act accordingly.

Draft resolution A/C.1/51/L.48/Rev.1 was adopted.

The Chairman: I now call on those delegations wishing to explain their position on the draft resolution just adopted.

Mr. Yativ (Israel): Israel joined the consensus on the draft resolution and reiterates its commitment to the Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC). Israel urges all countries in the region that have not yet done so to accede to the Convention. Abolishing chemical weapons and the creation of a world and Middle East region free from chemical weapons is important for the achievement of stability and comprehensive peace in the region.

Israel is convinced that the CWC can be generally effective if it is treated solely on its merits. Its implementation and verification should cover the region as a whole. The region at large should adhere to its principles and should comply with its provisions.

Mr. Akram (Pakistan): Pakistan supported the adoption without a vote of the draft resolution contained in A/C.1/51/L.48/Rev.1.

In our view, the call in operative paragraph 2 for ratification of the Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC) by the declared possessors of chemical weapons is the key objective of the draft resolution.

The CWC was concluded after many years of intense negotiations. Its conclusion became possible only when the two declared chemical-weapon States were finally able to agree on the scope, objectives and purposes of the Convention. We believe that the entry into force of the CWC without these States would negate the objectives of the Treaty as a genuine disarmament measure. The entry into force of the Convention, in these unforeseen circumstances, would also prejudice the effective operation of the treaty, which must commence with the participation of all the relevant States.

In this context, we regard operative paragraph 5 as important and, indeed, crucial. The Preparatory Commission must convene

> "as necessitated by circumstances in connection with the occurrence of the trigger point, a meeting of the Commission to provide appropriate guidance;" (A/C.1/51/L.48/Rev.1, para. 5)

It must consider all the implications of the potential anomalies and take the appropriate decisions to ensure the integrity of the CWC regime at the inception of the treaty.

Furthermore, as noted in operative paragraph 6, the Preparatory Commission needs to conclude important pending work. In our view, this includes the review of the circumstances of entry into force and involves taking decisions in this context.

Pakistan signed the CWC in keeping with our commitment to global chemical demilitarization. We are also committed to keeping our region free of chemical weapons. Our decision on ratification of the CWC would, however, have to take into account the positions of all the relevant States regarding ratification of the Convention so as to ensure that the CWC remains what it was intended to be — a disarmament treaty — and that it does not become transformed into another instrument for non-proliferation alone.

Mr. Mesdoua (Algeria) (*interpretation from French*): My delegation was surprised to see two other countries joining the list of sponsors, as the delegation of Romania pointed out. My delegation is surprised by this situation, since it is the thirty-third State party and wished to be a sponsor, but waited for action to be taken. We are happy that it was adopted by consensus. We wanted to be on the list of sponsors, but were initially dissuaded by the sponsors of the draft resolution.

The Chairman: The Committee will proceed to take action on draft resolution A/C.1/51/L.11/Rev.2.

I call on those delegations wishing to make general statements on the draft resolution.

Mr. Parnohadiningrat (Indonesia): My delegation would like to make a brief general statement on the question of the convening of the fourth special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament (SSOD IV).

It is beyond a doubt that an overwhelming majority of Member States have unequivocally expressed their support for the convening of SSOD IV. This was fully reflected in, among others, the documents adopted by 113 States members of the Non-Aligned Movement last year in Cartagena.

It should be recalled that the consensus decisions taken in the past to confirm the previous special sessions devoted to disarmament have been in response to the need to undertake a periodic review of developments in arms control and to formulate strategies leading to general and complete disarmament, especially in its nuclear aspects.

Today, the need to convene SSOD IV has become all the more essential in the post-cold-war era, when it is appropriate for the international community to consider disarmament agendas with specific complements and characteristics serving the security interests of every State Member of the United Nations.

The original sponsors of draft resolution A/C.1/51/L.11 have made tremendous efforts to accommodate the positions of various delegations, as indicated by the many changes reflected in document A/C.1/51/L.11/Rev.2. The number of new paragraphs in A/C.1/51/L.11/Rev.2 also demonstrates the flexible approach of the original sponsors in their determined pursuit of the objective of convening SSOD IV by consensus.

We remain confident, therefore, that our endeavours to convene that special session can, nonetheless, go forward, as indicated in the draft resolution. My delegation, as an original sponsor of the draft resolution, has decided to continue to pursue this objective. Therefore, we will support the draft resolution.

The Chairman: The Committee will now proceed to take action on draft resolution A/C.1/51/L.11/Rev.2.

A recorded vote has been requested.

I call on the Secretary of the Committee.

Mr. Lin Kuo-Chung (Secretary of the Committee): Draft resolution A/C.1/51/L.11/Rev.2, entitled "Convening of the fourth special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament", was introduced by the representative of Colombia, on behalf of the States Members of the United Nations that are members of the Non-Aligned Movement, at the 14th meeting of the Committee on 4 November 1996.

A recorded vote was taken.

In favour:

Afghanistan, Albania, Algeria, Andorra, Argentina, Armenia, Australia, Austria, Azerbaijan, Bahrain, Bangladesh, Belarus, Belgium, Belize, Benin, Bhutan, Bolivia, Botswana, Brazil, Brunei Darussalam, Bulgaria, Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Canada, Cape Verde, Chad, Chile, China, Colombia, Congo, Costa Rica, Côte d'Ivoire, Croatia, Cuba, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Democratic People's Republic of Korea, Denmark, Djibouti, Ecuador, Egypt, El Salvador, Estonia, Ethiopia, Finland, France, Gabon, Georgia, Germany, Ghana, Greece, Guatemala, Guyana, Haiti, Hungary, Iceland, India, Indonesia, Iran (Islamic Republic of), Ireland, Italy, Jamaica, Japan, Kazakstan, Kenya, Kuwait, Kyrgyzstan, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Latvia, Lebanon, Liberia, Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malaysia, Maldives, Malta, Marshall Islands, Mauritania, Mauritius, Mexico, Monaco, Mongolia, Morocco, Mozambique, Myanmar, Namibia, Nepal, Netherlands, New Zealand, Nicaragua, Niger, Nigeria, Norway, Oman, Pakistan, Panama, Papua New Guinea, Paraguay, Peru, Philippines, Poland, Portugal, Qatar, Republic of Korea, Republic of Moldova, Romania, Samoa, Saudi Arabia, Singapore, Slovakia, Slovenia, Solomon Islands, South Africa, Spain, Sri Lanka, Sudan, Suriname, Sweden, Syrian Arab Republic, Thailand, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Togo, Tunisia, Turkey, Uganda, Ukraine, United Arab Emirates, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, United Republic of Tanzania, Uruguay, Venezuela, Viet Nam, Yemen, Zambia, Zimbabwe

Against:

Israel, United States of America

Abstaining:

Russian Federation

Draft resolution A/C.1/51/L.11/Rev.2 was adopted by 137 votes to 2, with 1 abstention.

The Chairman: I now call on those delegations wishing to make statements in explanation of vote or position on the draft resolution just adopted.

Mr. Ledogar (United States of America): The United States voted against draft resolution A/C.1/51/L.11/Rev.2 because the sponsors insist on specifying a date — 1999 — for holding the fourth special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament (SSOD IV) before there is any consensus on the purposes, objectives or content of such a meeting. Given that such consensus on substance was absent, the United States does not believe that it is either appropriate or worthwhile to schedule, even as a target date, a special session devoted to disarmament at any time before the end of this century. We do not want to hold another SSOD just for the sake of holding one and we certainly do not want to repeat the failures of SSOD II and SSOD III.

To achieve success, a fourth special session will require an atmosphere in which all participants are willing to discuss, constructively and usefully, questions on disarmament across the board, including nuclear and other weapons of mass destruction, conventional weapons, regional issues, confidence-building and security-building measures and disarmament machinery. The United States has heard from others, however, that an SSOD IV would, in reality, be a special session on nuclear disarmament only.

This assumption was confirmed again at this session of the First Committee. We only have to look at the Myanmar draft resolution on nuclear disarmament; the Non-Aligned Movement draft resolution on bilateral nuclear-arms negotiations; the Malaysian draft resolution on the International Court of Justice; the Brazilian draft resolution on a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the southern hemisphere; and the Indian draft resolution on the prohibition of nuclear weapons. These actions — both the introduction of the draft resolutions and the votes thereon — speak louder than any words pretending that there is a balanced approach to disarmament.

In conclusion, I should like to say that the United States is grateful that one of the outcomes of draft resolution A/C.1/51/L.11/Rev.2 was a reaffirmation that any future SSOD and any SSOD Preparatory Committee will be convened by consensus. We look forward to discussing the substance of SSOD IV at the forthcoming session of the United Nations Disarmament Commission and at the one that will follow in 1998. The United States hopes that the coming year will reveal a willingness by the international community to pay attention to all disarmament issues and not to focus solely on nuclear disarmament.

Mr. O'Rourke (Ireland): This explanation of vote is made on behalf of the States members of the European Union. The countries of Central and Eastern Europe associated with the European Union, the associated country, Cyprus, as well as Iceland and Norway — European Free Trade Association (EFTA) countries and members of the European Economic Area — align themselves with this statement.

The member States of the European Union voted in favour of the draft resolution just adopted, contained in document A/C.1/51/L.11/Rev.2. We deeply regret that consensus was not possible on the draft resolution, as it is the firm conviction of the Union that the process leading to the convening of the fourth special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament (SSOD IV), including the convening of its Preparatory Committee, will require consensus among the States Members of the United Nations, as was the case in respect of the previous special sessions. We expect the sponsors of the draft resolution to continue to contribute to building such consensus.

The European Union has already shown its commitment to working towards agreement at the session of the United Nations Disarmament Commission held earlier this year. We remain convinced that SSOD IV must be carefully and thoroughly prepared in order to secure consensus on its objectives. Its agenda should be balanced between subjects relating to weapons of mass destruction and conventional armaments in order to cover the whole range of disarmament issues. The European Union wishes to underline that its support for this draft resolution does not imply any agreement with regard to the content of the fifth preambular paragraph and that the inclusion of this paragraph should not be seen as a precedent.

The European Union looks forward to participating in further constructive exchanges on SSOD IV at the 1997 session of the Disarmament Commission and will contribute to building the consensus necessary for us to agree on the date of SSOD IV and to the convening of a Preparatory Committee before the end of the fifty-first session of the General Assembly. We call upon all United Nations Member States to work constructively to this end.

For the record, I should also like to say that Cyprus wishes to align itself with the explanation of vote that I gave earlier on draft resolution A/C.1/51/L.54.

Mr. Berdennikov (Russian Federation) (*interpretation from Russian*): The Russian delegation abstained in the voting on draft resolution A/C.1/51/L.11/Rev.2, as we are firmly convinced that the question of convening a fourth special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament should be resolved only on the basis of consensus. If such general agreement is absent, it would be a mistake to expect success in the special session.

The text of the draft resolution itself does not cause us any difficulties and we could support it if it enjoyed general support. We regret the fact that, during the consultations at this session of the General Assembly, we were unable to work out a draft that enjoyed general support. The draft, on which consensus was not achieved, was hastily put to the vote. This can only damage the idea of holding a fourth special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament and should not set a precedent for the future.

Mr. Moradi (Islamic Republic of Iran): I should like to explain the position of my delegation on the draft resolution contained in document A/C.1/51/L.11/Rev.2, entitled "Convening of the fourth special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament". We very much regret that this draft resolution was not adopted by consensus, as its sponsors tailored the elements to the satisfaction of one delegation in the hope that it would be adopted by consensus. This was not the case. However, we have a reservation with regard to the concept of consensus introduced in various paragraphs of the draft resolution. This should not set a precedent for future special sessions devoted to disarmament (SSOD), and we consider it to be without prejudice to the process of decision-making in the General Assembly, which is by voting, including on SSODs.

The Chairman: We have concluded our fourth stage of work and have completed action on all draft resolutions contained in the 10 clusters.

Programme of work

The Chairman: I should like to draw the attention of delegations to the fact that, in accordance with the Committee's programme of work and timetable, the First Committee will begin its general debate, consideration of and action on agenda item 62, entitled "Question of Antarctica", on Monday, 25 November 1996, at 10 a.m. in Conference Room 4. As agreed, the deadline for submission of draft resolutions will be Wednesday, 20 November 1996, at 6 p.m.

The meeting rose at 5.40 p.m.